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THE
INDIAN HILL
INDIANS







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THE INDIAN HILL INDIANS

*Father PIERRE FRANÇOIS PINET, of the
Society of Jesus and his Mission of the
Guardian Angel, 1696-1699*

THE MIAMI VILLAGE

CHICAGO
1920



The Indian Hill Indians



AS EARLY as 1696, the land on which the Indian Hill Club is located, was the site of a village of the Miami Tribe of the Algonquin Confederation.

The Algonquins were dispersed by the great Iroquois invasion of 1680, but the Miamis, who were only lukewarm in their allegiance to the Confederation, stayed in the Illinois country, while the other Tribes were driven west of the Mississippi River. The greater part of the Miamis afterward settled in Indiana. The few remaining around the Chicago Portage were later exterminated by the Sacs and Foxes, the Kickapoos and the Pottawattomies, who came down from Green Bay and from Michigan.

The Miamis were the Indians that the French Explorers and Missionaries

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found around Chicago; the Pottawatomies were here in the early part of the nineteenth century when the Americans came.

*Father PIERRE FRANÇOIS PINET, of
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On September 14, 1698, Saint Cosme, Montigny, Davion, Vincennes and Tonty left Mackinac for the Illinois country in eight birch canoes. They paddled along the Western shore of Lake Michigan, intending to cross the Chicago Portage into the Des Plaines and thence down the Illinois River. Saint Cosme says: "We were pressed by the season." On October 7, 1698, they reached what is now Milwaukee, and on October 8th, Racine, where Vincennes left them. Here they were detained by bad weather and did not proceed until October 19th.

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Saint Cosme wrote: "We cabined on the 20th, five leagues from Chicaqw. * * * We had considerable difficulty in getting ashore and saving our canoes. We had to throw everything into the water. * * * We went by land, M. de Montigny, Davion and myself, to the house of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, our people staying with the baggage. We found there Reverend Father Pinet and Reverend Father Buinateau. * * * Their house is built on the bank of a small lake, having a lake on one side and a large fine prairie on the other. The Indian village is of over one hundred and fifty cabins, and one league on the river there is another village almost as large. They are both of the Miamis."

Saint Cosme grieved that the work of the Missionaries was barren of results. "Little fruit is produced," he writes, "in those who have grown up and hardened in debauchery," but he consoles himself that "the children are baptised, and even the medicine men,

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most opposed to Christianity, allow their children to be baptised. They are even very glad to have them instructed, so that it may be hoped that when the old stock dies off there will be a new Christian people.’

This letter is interesting both as a human document and because it permits the location of Father Pinet’s Mission to be pretty accurately conjectured.

Saint Cosme and his companions landed on the Lake Shore fifteen miles north of the mouth of the Chicago River. They went by land to the Mission. The house, he says, was on the bank of a small lake, having a lake on one side and a large, fine prairie on the other. It has been pointed out that the small lake was probably the Skokie, which was then and for many years afterwards a body of water of considerable size. Saint Cosme says, in addition, that one league on the river there was another Miami village almost as large

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as the one in which Father Pinet had his church. It is well known that there was a village on the north branch of the Chicago River, near where it joins the Skokie.

From the foregoing, Frank R. Grover, in a paper read before the Chicago Historical Society, locates Father Pinet's Mission on the sand ridge near what is now the south end of the grounds of the Indian Hill Club. While the location of the Mission at this place has been disputed, there is no doubt that there was an Indian village here. The difference of opinion about the location of the Mission is due to the fact that there were two Miami villages. Saint Cosme speaks of the other as being on a river, a league distant from the one where Father Pinet had his Mission. It is just as reasonable for us to claim Father Pinet as the patron saint of the Indian Hill Club as to concede him to Glen View. Indeed, the probabilities are that his

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Mission was in the village which undoubtedly was located on the Club grounds.

The Mission, which was called the Mission of the Guardian Angel, was in existence in 1696, when Saint Cosme visited it. It was broken up the following year, according to Jesuit writers, through Frontenac's hostility, and was afterwards re-established. It was probably abandoned in 1699 or 1700.

The Miami Village

The Miami Village, as reported by Saint Cosme, consisted of over a hundred and fifty "cabins." These were along a trail which followed the summit of the sand ridge. This trail began at the mouth of the Chicago River and extended to Green Bay. It was afterwards the line of communication of the early settlers between the Chicago Portage and Green Bay, and finally became the Green Bay Road.

The Miami Village

This Miami village was probably the usual straggling group of Indian lodges. It extended from where the entrance to the Kenilworth Sanitarium now is, as far north as the present village hall. The knoll where the tenth tee is was a lookout station. This spot is marked "Indian Hill" on some of the old maps. There is no doubt that an Indian village was on the Club's property. During the construction work on the course, conclusive evidence of this was discovered. Numbers of arrow and spear heads, scrapers and stone hammers were found.

The quantities of rejected and unfinished implements and the debris of manufacture are particularly significant. This indicates a certain permanence of residence. Finished and perfect implements are more commonly met with on hunting fields or battle grounds.

Wherever the sod has been turned along the ridge, stone flakes have been found. Those chips are as characteris-

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tic of the Indian workman as shavings and sawdust are of a carpenter, and accumulations of them point unmistakably to the existence of a village where primitive industry was carried on. Curiously, the area where the evidence of Indian work appears, coincides almost exactly with the location of the Miami village from historical sources.

The specimens in this case were all found on the Club's property during construction work.

The larger implements are hammer stones and axes.

Below them are grouped arrow and lance heads and parts of finished points.

The implements in the middle of the case are scrapers and chisels.

The remainder are imperfect or unfinished implements and pieces rejected during fabrication.

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